

HeraldPOST

Serving the communities in U.S. Army Garrison Baden-Württemberg

Doctors: mTBI injuries treatable

ERMC Public Affairs

Mild Traumatic Brain Injury, unlike Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, is a physical ailment.

As such, it is easily treatable in most cases and often fades naturally within days. When it doesn't, it can be successfully treated with one to three visits to a Soldier's primary care manager.

"Recovery from a Mild Traumatic Brain Injury, also called concussion, begins immediately following the injury event," said Maria Crane, the mTBI program manager for the Europe Regional Medical Command. "That event may be the head being struck by an object like a ball, the head running into something like a wall, and/or the brain slamming back and forth against the inside of the skull as can occur in whiplash. Troops down-range have experienced all too often the tragedy of objects penetrating the brain when bullets get past Kevlar. Every day, doctors are learning more

see **mTBI** page 8

Honoring a covenant



Jason L. Austin

Eoin Oravetz and Andre Ross couldn't keep their feet on the ground during some free time on the playground behind Heidelberg's Lions' Den July 17, during the Exceptional Family Member Program Summer Camp. Army Family Covenant funding was used to organize the first summer camp program for EFMP families. Twelve children participated in the one-week camp with in a range of activities such as therapeutic riding, pottery class, therapeutic music sessions and dance and movement classes.

Nearly \$674,000 invested in Army families

By Christina Callaghan

USAG HEIDELBERG ARMY COMMUNITY SERVICE

In the little over a year since the Army Family Covenant was signed in Heidelberg, it has made a positive impact on the garrison's family programs.

The Army Family Covenant was signed in a star-studded ceremony Oct. 26, 2007, that featured the Chief of Staff of the Army and the commanding general of USAREUR. Since then, \$375,000 has gone toward creating five new positions at Army Community Service and more than \$80,000 has been invested in Exceptional Family Program Respite Care. Additional non-appropriated funds have also become available.

We now have a Soldier and Family Assistance Center human resources specialist, an educational guidance counselor and an SFAC specialist in support of the Warrior Transition Unit. We have a marketing person just for ACS and an outreach coordinator who both help to get our services out to more people in the community. They especially focus on reaching junior enlisted spouses. We have also been able to hire administrative support that allows the other ACS staff to be able to focus more on their clients than on administrative work.

Several Soldiers in the Warrior Transition Unit have remarked that they could not have made a smooth transition to civilian

see **COVENANT** page 12

Marriages grow through 'Strong Bonds'

By Donna Miles

AMERICAN FORCES PRESS SERVICE

WASHINGTON - Service members and their spouses are flocking to a broad array of programs to help them strengthen their family relationships as the services step up efforts to curb divorce rates.

Military divorce rates rose by .1 percent - to 3.4 percent - during fiscal

year 2008, with 492 more divorces than the previous year, reported Lt. Col Les' Melnyk, a Pentagon spokesman. Military-wide, 25,750 marriages ended in divorce last year.

The Marine Corps, with 3,077 divorces last year, experienced the biggest increase, from 3.3 percent in fiscal 2007 to 3.7 percent.

The Army rate also increased - to 3.5 percent - with 10,200 divorces last year.

The Army reported a 3.3 percent rate in fiscal 2007, with 9,134 divorces.

Meanwhile, divorce rates dropped .2 percent last year in the Navy and remained stable in the Air Force. The Navy reported a 3 percent rate in fiscal 2008, with 5,441 divorces representing a 618 decrease from the previous year's number.

The Air Force reported a 3.5 percent

see **STRONG BONDS** page 12

HP THURSDAY
Dec. 18, 2008

Speed Read

NEXT HP JAN. 8

The next Herald Post will be published Jan. 8. Deadline for submissions is the Thursday before publication.

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Prohibited on post, fireworks play a large role in German New Year's celebrations. Safety should play a big role in your celebrations. 3

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AAFES fuel coupons go the way of the 8-track Dec. 31. Government vehicle drivers need to ensure they have a government-issued fuel card. 6

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Soldiers from the 21st Theater Sustainment Command set up the Early Entry Command Post during the first phase of Agile Challenge. 8

Defense Details

LIVING HISTORY

The corridors of the Pentagon opened Monday to the Army's "Living History" exhibit which features more than 400 historical artifacts, some 80 pieces of original artwork and hundreds of photographs and films that tell the history of the American Soldier since the Army's birth on June 14, 1775.

BAH RATE ANNOUNCED

Housing allowances for military members will go up an average of 6.9 percent in 2009, Defense Department officials announced Monday. The increase comes to an average of about \$95 per month across the board. Some service members will not see any increase at all, and others will see less than that the average increase.

Army news: www.army.milDefense news: www.defenselink.mil

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COMMENTARY

Have a safe, happy holiday season while living in Europe

By Col. Robert Ulses

USAG BADEN-WÜRTTEMBERG COMMANDER

Many of us will be fortunate enough to spend the holiday season with friends and family in Europe.

The holiday season in Europe is filled with old world charms, holiday spirit, and windows or balconies decorated with festive reminders.

The winter holiday season is a beautiful time of year. I encourage you to make the most of it and enjoy what Europe has to offer. From Christmas markets to choirs singing Christmas favorites, there is something for everyone.

Whatever your holiday plan is – do it safely. Use common sense and risk management to keep you and your loved ones safe throughout this holiday season.

The biggest threat to your safety is your Privately Owned Vehicle. POV accidents continue to be our leading cause of accidental death. Regrettably, history shows that motor vehicle accidents increase during this time of

The winter holiday season is a beautiful time of year. I encourage you to make the most of it and enjoy what Europe has to offer.

year due to the inherent increase in travel and hazards of winter driving.

To avoid being involved in an accident, follow these time-tested simple rules: Get enough rest; slow down (adjust speed to match traffic and weather conditions); be patient and don't tailgate; and give yourself adequate driving time if travelling.

Know your limits and leave your car keys with a friend you can trust to watch out for you when celebrating with alcoholic beverages – it's the smart thing to do, have a plan to get home.

Being in Europe in winter also presents wonderful opportunities to enjoy Alpine sports. I highly encourage you to participate in outdoor activities such as skiing and ice skating. However, please participate at a level commensurate with your skills and

abilities.

Every winter season people are seriously injured in falls while participating in winter sports.

Ensure you dress appropriately in layers so that you can adjust your clothing to match your level of exertion

If you're staying home, be a good neighbor. Take time to remember those deployed. It is because of the commitment of our fellow service members (Marines, sailors, Airmen and Reservists) that those of us at home can enjoy the holiday season.

Check on the families of deployed members and single Soldiers and if possible consider having them over to share in holiday season activities. It will not only brighten their holidays but enrich yours as well.

I expect leaders to conduct Under

the Oak Tree sessions and safety briefings that include POV, motorcycle, and winter safety precautions.

Always remember fire prevention, check your smoke detectors and rehearse emergency evacuation plans. Ensure candles and other holiday decorations, such as Christmas tree lights; do not pose a fire hazard.

The holiday period is often a difficult time for those who are separated from their families and their homes.

Leaders must know how to recognize depression, suicidal behavior and those at risk for spouse abuse or domestic violence. Chaplains are available to help families deal with many problems during this holiday period.

Leaders and Soldiers should not hesitate to ask for help if needed.

I would like to thank every member of the community – military, civilian and family members – for your many contributions and continued support.

May each of you have a safe and joyous holiday season and always remain vigilant.

COMMENTARY

How to get your face, unit on Armed Forces Network television

George A. Smith

AFN EUROPE OPERATIONS MANAGER

You can get your story ideas on AFN TV more often if you use some of my 30-years worth of insider secrets.

In my time with AFN, TBS, Voice of America and two commercial radio stations, I found the callers who convinced the assignments editor to cover their story did so by selling the editor on the story, not the event.

Your best chance in getting the assignments editor to cover your event instead of someone else's is by digging deep into your event and finding the "story within a story."

Marathons happen all the time. So instead of merely asking AFN to report on the run, suggest the station tell the story from the angle of the father and son competing, or the recovering cancer victim who has taken up running.

Another tip to help convince the AFN assign-

ments editor to send a team is to ensure the story has visual and audio appeal. If your story has limited visual appeal, still ask for coverage. The station could do a radio news story on it, or short 15-20 second TV story.

Your story can also get on the air courtesy of a slow news day if you request coverage weeks or even months in advance.

One of the best ways to lock in coverage is to convince your commander of the importance of the story. AFN Europe's mission is to provide command information and entertainment to the American military community. If a commander says the story is important, that carries a lot of weight with AFN. AFN Europe will do its best to get that story on the air, even if it means asking another station, or the network headquarters to cover it.

While having a commander vouch for the importance of your story helps, your story will be more interesting if the story does not focus on the commander.

Hearing the commander's subordinates or family members speak from the heart about what they learned or what they feel about the event is far more credible and interesting to audience.

One really good technique to lock in an AFN team for coverage is to explain that the reporter can get several stories in the same area in a short period of time. Some AFN reporters have to travel 90 minutes to cover a story. It's far more tempting to cover the story across the street. But, if you set up several stories in the same area, you just helped the assignments editor work more efficiently, so congratulations, your coverage priority just moved up the list!

So there you have it – a bunch of secrets on how you can lock in AFN TV story coverage.

Come up with an interesting story within a story with visual and audio appeal, request coverage in advance, get your commander's backing, focus on low-ranking people and come up with several story ideas for the shoot.



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SAFETY

Holiday fireworks safety

Follow these tips for safer New Year's celebrations

USAG Heidelberg Safety Office

Fireworks are prohibited on base in accordance with Army in Europe Regulation 600-1, Regulated Activities in Europe. We strongly recommend personnel living off base also refrain from using fireworks. Avoidance is the best way to protect your family, period.

However, if you are planning to use fireworks to celebrate the new year, keep these safety tips in mind:

- ♦Heed the warnings and cautions. Please treat fireworks with respect, read all of the cautions and warnings and use common sense.
- ♦Lighting fireworks indoors, throwing them from automobiles, and lighting multiple devices at the same time can lead to accidents and are not how fireworks are intended to be used.
- ♦Kids should never play with fireworks. German law prohibits children younger than 18 from using firecrackers, rockets, roman candles blank cartridges and similar items containing black powder. Children younger than 18 are allowed to use sparklers under adult supervision. If you give kids sparklers, make sure they keep them outside and away from the face, clothing, and hair. Sparklers can reach 1,800° Fahrenheit (982° Celsius) - hot enough to melt gold.

- ♦Buy only legal fireworks (legal fireworks have a label with the manufacturer's name and directions; illegal ones are unlabeled) and store them in a cool, dry place. Never try to make your own fireworks.

- ♦Always use fireworks outside and have a bucket of water or a hose nearby in case of accidents.

- ♦Steer clear of others – fireworks have been known to shoot in the wrong direction. Never throw or point fireworks at someone.

- ♦Don't hold fireworks in your hand or have any part of your body over them while lighting. Wear some sort of eye protection. Don't carry fireworks in your pocket – the friction could set them off.

- ♦Point fireworks away from homes and keep away from brush, leaves, and flammable substances.

- ♦Light one firework at a time (not in glass or metal containers) and never try to relight a dud.

- ♦Don't allow kids to pick up dud fireworks after an event; some may still be smoldering and can explode at any time.

- ♦Soak all fireworks in a bucket of water before throwing them in the trash to prevent fire.

- ♦Think about your pet. Animals have sensitive ears and can be extremely frightened or stressed during fireworks. Keeping pets indoors is best.

Keep thieves away from holiday cheer

Robert Szostek

USAREUR PROVOST MARSHAL PAO

The holiday season is a time when thieves are active, and the U.S. Army Europe Office of the Provost Marshal is offering some precautionary advice to help keep the holiday season a merry one.

When traveling and celebrating at any time of year pickpockets are a major concern.

"Our statistics show that about 25 USAREUR personnel fall victim to pickpockets every month," said Lt. Col. Lon Walker, chief of law enforcement operations at the USAREUR OPM.

Most victims are targeted in bars and clubs, or in other crowded places such as on buses, in train stations, airports, stores or restaurants, he added.

To deter pickpockets, Walker recommends that women carry their purses in front of them, close to the body, not dangling by straps, and zipped or snapped shut. Wallets are safest in an inside coat pocket or front pants pocket. "Don't leave valuables in coat pockets hung on a public coat rack or draped over a chair at a restaurant," he advised.

In general, it is best to be aware of distractions and surroundings. Common distractions include an approach by a stranger asking questions, or an offer from a stranger to help move packages that may be a ruse to allow an accomplice to attempt to steal a wallet, backpack or purse. Entrances and exits to public transportation are a favorite hangout for pickpockets.

Vehicle break-ins are another concern at holiday time.

Walker said car break-ins occur most fre-

quently when the thief sees a popular item such as GPS navigator in plain sight inside a car. Portable navigation systems are popular items in Europe, OPM officials said, and should be secured when not in use.

In addition, the serial numbers should be recorded, to help military and German police track and recover them if they are stolen.

Other magnets for thieves are laptop computers, wallets, purses or items of military clothing. Walker noted that thefts often occur when cars parked are on the street and in poorly lit areas. To prevent break-ins park in garages or other well-lit areas with the doors locked, as German law requires.

Security is just as important at home, OPM officials said, particularly for anyone traveling during the holidays.

Walker urged people to lock their doors and windows whenever they leave their houses, apartments or barracks rooms, even for a short time.

He offered the following tips for holiday travelers:

- ♦Don't advertise that you will be away from your home or barracks.

- ♦Stop newspaper and mail deliveries.

- ♦Leave a light on in the house.

- ♦Let trusted neighbors know the dates you will be gone and ask them to watch for suspicious activity and report it.

- ♦Soldiers living in the barracks should secure personal belongings in a wall locker.

- ♦Take photos of valuables and make a list of valuables and their serial numbers, to aid in their recovery if they are stolen.

More useful tips are available at www.ncpc.org/cms/cms-upload/ncpc/files/holiday04.pdf.

Check transformers for fire-free holidays

IMCOM-Europe Public Affairs

Aaaah, the holidays – cooking, fireplaces blazing, presents, people, decorations and wrapping paper.

The perfect mix for a great holiday season for most people. And people can keep it that way by heeding common sense and observing fire safety, said Gerald Adams, fire protection specialist for Installation Management Command-Europe.

According to Adams, while people are generally mindful of safety precautions associated with cooking and decorating, one of Europe's overlooked fire hazards is the commonly-used voltage transformer.

Faulty, aged and misused voltage transformers have caused fire in the past, fire that likely could have been prevented if the voltage transformers were inspected and properly used, said Adams, who offered several transformer tips for ensuring holidays remain safe.

- ♦Inspect the units often to ensure that they are not overheating; also, use them in compliance with the manufacturer's recommendations.

- ♦Only plug in appliances that are within the voltage rating as identified on the affixed label.

- ♦Overloading will caused the transformer to overheat and possibly cause an unwanted fire to occur.

- ♦Don't operate these units near a water source – a possible electrocution and/or fire may occur.

- ♦If these units don't need to be connected when you leave your home, disconnect the units.

In addition to the transformers, Adams said there are a few "need to knows" about electrical extension cords, multiple plugs and similar appliances.

First, they should comply with and be approved by Underwriter's Laboratory (UL) listing or the National Electric Code. The extension cord should also be the appropriate gauge to the appliance in which it is servicing. He then cautioned users to never run extension cords under carpets or to overload electrical outlets, both which could result in unwanted fire.

Adams said that by conducting an inspection of voltage transformers and associated electrical cords, people can help fire-proof their homes.

In addition to transformer safety, he also encouraged folks to continue to be mindful of the more common safety tips:

- ♦Have a fire extinguisher nearby in case a fire should start. Also, have a first aid kit nearby for any unseen accidents.

- ♦Avoid loose-fitting clothes when cooking to avoid items from contacting the stove or the grill. And, move all loose towels and pot holders away from the flames or heated surfaces.

- ♦Clean your smoke detectors and change the batteries every year. Also, if you own a carbon monoxide detector, use it in accordance with manufacturer's instructions and make sure those batteries are fresh, too.

- ♦Inspect holiday lights each year for frayed wires, bare spots, gaps in the insulation, broken or cracked sockets, and excessive kinking or wear before putting them up.

- ♦Be smart about candles. Candles are among the leading causes of fires in the home. If you do use them, make sure they are in stable holders and place them where they cannot be easily knocked down.

Finally, he said, people need to know when and how to call for help, to develop and practice a home escape plan.

Emergency phone numbers:

The Army in Europe military police emergency number is DSN 114. To call from a non-DSN phone, dial the appropriate civilian to military prefix for your area, then 114.

Mannheim NCO honored as culinary warrior in USAREUR, IMCOM Connelly Award event

Spc. Fabian Ortega
U.S. ARMY EUROPE PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE

The Army's top food service Soldiers and dining facilities were honored at the Installation Management Command-Europe and U.S. Army Europe 41st Annual Food Service Awards Ceremony at the Patrick Henry Village Pavilion, Dec. 11.

Sgt. Quincy Queen, a food service specialist with the 72nd Signal Battalion, 5th Signal Command, was named Culinary Warrior Noncommissioned Officer of the Year, while Pfc. Scotty Anderson of the 212th Combat Support Hospital earned the title of Culinary Warrior of the Year.

"The objective of the (Culinary Warrior of the Year) program is to recognize the excellence, professionalism and selfless service which is provided to our Soldiers and diners on a daily basis by our food service Soldiers across the command," said Col. Catherine Cutler, chief of sustainment operations for the USAREUR logistics directorate. "The competition provides a tangible incentive for all assigned food service Soldiers and food operations NCOs to strive to attain."

Sgt. Michael Oglesby of the 212th was named runner-up in the Culinary Warrior NCO category, while Spc. Daryl Jordan of Headquarters, USAREUR was the Culinary Warrior runner-up.

The ceremony also recognized four dining facilities with Philip A. Connelly Awards for Excellence in Army Food Service. The Connelly award program, which evaluates Army dining facilities on food preparation, quality and customer approval, was established in 1968 and is the gold standard for culinary



Spc. Fabian Ortega

Winners and runners-up in the Installation Management Command-Europe and U.S. Army Europe 41st Annual Food Service Awards Ceremony pose with their trophies and medals following the ceremony at the Patrick Henry Village Pavilion, Dec. 11. Culinary Warrior NCO of the Year Sgt. Quincy Queen of the 72nd Signal Battalion is pictured in Class A uniform at center, and Culinary Warrior of the Year Pfc. Scotty Anderson of the 212th Combat Support Hospital is right of Queen. In addition to the individual awards, the best large and small garrison dining facilities were recognized during the ceremony.

competitions, food service officials said.

The Connelly program is divided into three categories, but awards were given in only two categories for fiscal year 2008 – large and small garrison dining facilities.

The 72nd Signal Battalion Dining Facility at Taylor Barracks in Mannheim was named the best small garrison dining facility. The Command Sgt. Maj. Lawrence T. Hickey Dining Facility at Camp Normandy in Grafenwöhr won top honor as the best large garrison facility.

"The dining facilities of today provide the widest range of cuisine at the highest level of quality," said Vivian McBride-Davis, chief of IMCOM-E's logistics division. "And the Soldier and civilian chefs that are present are clearly the cream of the crop and represent the best of what the Army has to offer."

The U.S. Army Garrison Hohenfels dining facility finished as runner-up in the small garrison category, while the South of the Alps Dining Facility in Vicenza, Italy was runner-up in the large garrison category.



Courtesy

Community members mingle at the Boys & Girls Club of America Art Expo, Dec. 9 at the Patrick Henry Village Pavilion. The expo showcased artwork from children ages 6-18.

Local youth art featured at expo

Staff Report

The Boys and Girls Club of America-sponsored Art Expo 2008 took place at the Patrick Henry Village Pavilion, Dec. 9.

Artwork from children ages 6 through 18 from the Heidelberg community was featured. There were 10 categories (pastels, monochromatic, mixed media, collage, print making, functional and non-functional sculpture, oil or acrylic, multicolored drawing, and watercolor) divided into four age groups (nine or younger, 10-12, 13-15, and 16-18).

Winners in 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place were given

gift certificates to the Arts and Crafts Center. The artwork of first place winners will be passed to the Regional Art Expo in Garmisch later this year. Regional finalists will then go on to the National Art Expo.

Jen Bieser, Arts and Crafts Center director, was the featured guest speaker at the Expo. Arts and Crafts Center staff members Mary Katherine Ripley, Erik Kraemer and Sascha Flemming judged the artwork.

"It's a tremendous opportunity to recognize the youth of Heidelberg," said Bill Mittenzwey, Child, Youth and School Service middle school and teen programs director.



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Early retirement withdrawals expensive over long haul

Capt. David L. Adamson
HEIDELBERG TAX CENTER

The Heidelberg Tax Center is committed to the complete and accurate completion of the community's taxes.

In this difficult economic time it may be tempting to withdraw money from either your Individual Retirement Account (IRA) or your Thrift Savings Plan (TSP). Keep in mind that the primary purpose of a retirement savings account is to withdraw money during retirement.

Taking money out of your traditional IRA/TSP account may alleviate some financial difficulties now but there are tax consequences that will cost more than you probably think over the long term.

What is an IRA?

An IRA is a trust or custodial account created or organized in the U.S. for exclusive benefits of an individual or his beneficiaries.

What is TSP?

A TSP is a retirement savings and investment plan for civilians employed

by the United States Government and members of the uniformed services designed to help save for the future. The retirement income one withdraws from a TSP account will depend on how much was contributed to the account during working years and the earnings on those contributions.

Consequences of IRA distribution

Taking an IRA distribution (withdrawal) before the age of 59 1/2 is called a premature distribution or withdrawal. The amount withdrawn will face tax withholding based on the current tax bracket rather than the lower tax bracket most persons fall into during retirement. You will also pay an additional 10 percent tax penalty.

Consequences of TSP Withdrawal

An in-service withdrawal is a withdrawal one makes from a TSP account while one is still actively employed in federal civilian service or the uniformed services. There are two types of in-service withdrawals: financial hardship withdrawals and age-based withdrawals. Both withdrawals are treated as taxable income.

Financial Hardship Withdrawal

This withdrawal has a minimum of 10 percent federal tax withholding and an additional 10 percent federal penalty tax for any withdrawal before the age of 59 1/2. TSP does not allow further contributions for six months following this type of withdrawal. You lose the amount initially withdrawn and any earnings that would have accrued from that amount up until retirement. Plus you lose any money that would have been contributed during the six months afterwards, plus interest.

Age-Based Withdrawal

This withdrawal is taken at the age of 59 1/2 or older but while still actively employed in federal civilian service or the uniformed services. Age-based withdrawal has a minimum of 20 percent federal tax withholding.

Before you decide to make a withdrawal from your IRA or TSP account while still employed or before retirement age, carefully consider not only the impact of your decision on the immediate need but also its impact on your future well-being. Live within

your means. If you find yourself in a desperate financial situation, consider all the resources at your disposal before withdrawing from a retirement account. Following this advice will save money over the long term.

Tax season is almost here. Start gathering the following documents for your return: W-2 or 1099, Social Security Cards or ITIN and picture ID. Additional documents you may need to bring, if applicable: Economic Stimulus Dollar Amount, Child Care Provider's Information and Child Care Costs, Rental Property, Mortgage Interest Statements and 2007 tax return. If married filing jointly, both tax filer and spouse must be present to file the tax return. If one spouse cannot be present, then he will need to visit the legal assistance office to acquire a power of attorney.

The Heidelberg Tax Center opens for the 2008 Tax Season on Feb. 2, and we look forward to your visit. Starting Jan. 26, please call DSN 370-7510 for an appointment with a certified tax preparer.

Fuel cards needed for government-owned vehicles

Staff Report

With the start of the new year, AAFES fuel coupons will no longer be usable. By now, most everyone has switched their privately owned vehicles over to the new AAFES fuel card, but what about government vehicles which use the AAFES official-use coupons?

All fuel coupons become obsolete and therefore any organization with a government, or official use vehicle will need to ensure they have a means of fueling up.

For those who dispatch a vehicle from the Interagency Fleet Management System, or has a permanent dispatch from garrison motor pools, will be issued a fuel card from that organization.

For those who own, or long-term lease vehicles directly, as well as those with short-term leases or rental vehicles for official use, must work with their fleet managers, U.S. Army Europe's Registry of Motor Vehicles and Army, Air Force Exchange Service to obtain fuel cards.

Unlike personal fuel cards, the GOV cards will function as a charge card with no ration or monetary limit, so positive control of the card is of the utmost importance.

GOV cards are assigned to a specific vehicle and may be used by any eligible driver for the vehicle. The fleet manager or dispatcher will provide the PIN number for the GOV card to the authorized driver. Drivers will use the PIN and enter odometer reading for transactions at Esso.

Drivers will show their ID, and enter the odometer reading at AAFES. Drivers will sign for the transaction at both Esso and AAFES and should turn in a copy of the transaction receipt with their dispatch and card at the end of official use.

As use of a GOV card represents a government purchase, each organization or unit is responsible for coordinating in advance with their contracting or procurement agency to establish authority for card use.

The GOV fuel card can also be used to purchase fuel for vehicles and equipment that cannot go to a Esso station, such as lawn mowers.

All personnel operating government vehicles and using a government fuel card must review video training modules from the IMCOM Europe Web site, www.imcom-europe.army.mil/sites/news/fuelcard_training.asp.

Toy Drop



Tech. Sgt. Jeremy Lock

Soldiers from the 82nd Airborne Division, Fort Bragg, NC., descend from an aircraft during Operation Toy Drop on Fort Bragg, N.C., Dec. 6. Operation Toy Drop is an annual airborne jump hosted by the U.S. Army Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations Command (Airborne) and supported by Fort Bragg's XVIII Airborne Corps and Pope Air Force Base's 43rd Airlift Wing. In support of the exercise, Soldiers donate a toy for a lottery ticket giving them the chance to jump under a foreign jumpmaster to earn their foreign jump wings.

mTBI

continued from page 1

about how the shock wave of explosions can affect brain function.”

She explained that with mTBI, Soldiers may experience loss of consciousness that can range from moments to hours. Or, there may be no loss of consciousness at all – just feeling intensely dazed and confused.

Other symptoms include headaches, nausea, feeling dizzy or off balance, along with sleep difficulties and problems with blurred or double vision. These symptoms may last for minutes to days.

“Most people with mTBI recover spontaneously without intervention or after a few days of rest and relaxation,” she said.

Treatment begins with identification that an event occurred. If a concussion is suspected downrange, a Military Acute Concussion Evaluation (MACE) is typically performed within the first 24-48 hours and the Soldier is kept under observation. Often if the person is able to get sleep and have their headaches treated, recovery occurs.

“If symptoms persist after seven days, a series of assessments can be performed by primary care providers investigating sleep, balance, vision, hearing, and pain.

The doctor will also look into mood changes and difficulties thinking. This can include poor focus, problems with short-term memory, slowed thought processes and difficulty learning new material.

The physician will determine whether the person needs more in-depth assessment and will develop a comprehensive treatment plan.

That plan may include one or more of the following: physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy, medication, behavioral health support, with referrals to neurology, neuropsychological testing, audiology and optometry.

“With the highly specialized staff available in Europe, trained specifically in TBI treatment and management, our Soldiers will get the care and support they need to remain fully active and functional doing what they do best, soldier on,” Crane said.

21st TSC sets up shop in the field

Soldiers raise command post, sets standards

By Sgt. Fay Conroy
21ST TSC PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Set up and construction of the Early Entry Command Post was completed before Thanksgiving, and the second phase of Agile Challenge 09 took place on Panzer Kaserne Dec. 1-5.

The first phase of Agile Challenge, held in Baumholder, focused mainly on the rapid setup of the EECP.

The first phase was about how the command post would look. It was the physical piece.

The second phase is more about staff training and the intellectual piece, said Lt. Col. Lance Burton, the chief of the 21st Theater Sustainment Command material readiness branch.

“We are using this exercise for two purposes – to better support our higher headquarters and to bring our new personnel up to the standard that the commanding general expects,” Burton said.

The exercise provides training to staff sections by simulating operating under austere conditions while conducting a humanitarian mission – something many 21st TSC Soldiers are familiar with, having already deployed in support of a humanitarian mission to the Republic of Georgia earlier this year.



Staff Sgt. Tyrone Basnight

Soldiers from the 21st Theater Sustainment Command connect air duct hoses and heaters to a DRASH tent system at Panzer Kaserne Nov. 25. The Soldiers were preparing for a training exercise scheduled for next week. The exercise, Agile Challenge 09 Phase II, will test the 21st TSC's ability to conduct sustainment operations in a contingency environment.

“This is a new-look exercise. We're focusing less on fighting a war, but more on conducting humanitarian missions,” Burton said.

A series of connecting tents, the EECP can be set up and fully functional in about 50 hours, said Sgt. Maj. Tomas Gonzales, the sergeant major of the 21st TSC plans and operations division.

It can also be shipped to the theater of operations via train, plane or ship.

In its current configuration, the command post provides more than 10,000 square feet of office space.

Two shifts of 80 people each can be accommodated inside the complex maze of honeycomb-shaped tentage.

Inside the EECP, 8,000 meters of cable connect the forward-deployed command post with the 21st TSC's main command post via Internet, video teleconferencing, phone lines, unsecure and secure e-mail networks, and three large-screen visual projection systems.

“In this theater we do not have an expeditionary sustainment command. This allows the 21st TSC commander to have a deployable component,” said Col. George Akin, the 21st TSC chief of plans and operations.

The two phases of Agile Challenge 09 were a buildup to a larger exercise, Austere Challenge 09, a U.S. Army Europe joint task force certification exercise scheduled for the spring.

Hunting knowledge



Courtesy photo

Lt. Col. Gerhard Schröter, V Corps, visited the Friedrich-von-Schiller Schule, an elementary school in Reilingen, to talk about what it takes to be a responsible hunter. Schröter became a “Jäger” in 2004 after taking the Hunting Course at the Heidelberg Rod and Gun Club. The fourth-grade students were fascinated by the rules and traditions of hunting in Germany, as well as the interesting details about the animals and what it takes to be a “Jäger.”

Lean Six Sigma a not-so-secret weapon

By Spc. Fabian Ortega
USAREUR PUBLIC AFFAIRS

U.S. Army Europe business practice experts say they believe in doing business better, faster and smarter. They also say they have a not-so-secret weapon to improve efficiency that anyone in USAREUR can employ.

That weapon is called Lean Six Sigma.

“Lean Six Sigma is about removing the waste and variation from our work processes,” said Jack Van Den Beldt, of the business practices and stewardship branch of USAREUR's resource management directorate. “We have work processes that we do every day but we may not be doing them as effectively or efficiently as we'd like.”

To help streamline the way USAREUR works, the command's continuous process improvement team offers a one-day LSS orientation course for DoD employees interested in learning more about the program, said Van Den Beldt.

“There is no commitment,” he said. “You walk in and get a day's worth of training, which includes a

simulation exercise that demonstrates how to eliminate waste from a work process.”

Van Den Beldt had a suggestion for any USAREUR employee, LSS trained or not, who wants to help improve one of their work processes: Engage your supervisor.

“Make suggestions,” he said. “I know as a supervisor I'm always open to better, faster and smarter ways to do our business. If (employees) need help with shaping their improvement ideas into suggestions, call my office. We can help.”

For information on the LSS orientation course or to take Van Den Beldt up on his offer of help, DoD employees can call the CPI team at DSN 370-7811 or 370-3530 or visit the civilian resource training application system Web site at <https://www.atrrs.army.mil/channels/chrtas> to sign up for the course.

Advanced training is also available for supervisors (Project Sponsor Workshops) and eligible employees (Green, Black and Master Black Belt certification) who want to learn more about LSS and continuous process improvement. Interested employees can call the numbers above for more information.

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U.S. Army photo

Lt. Gen. Benjamin R. Mixon, U.S. Army Pacific commander, and Lt. Gen. Kazushi Izumi, commander Japan Ground Self Defense Force Eastern Army, salute the colors during the playing of their nation's national anthems at the opening ceremony for Yama Sakura 55, held Dec. 7, on the grounds of the JGSDF Transportation School at Camp Asaka, Japan. Yama Sakura 55 is one of USARPAC's most important bilateral exercises of the year.



Petty Officer 2nd Class Todd Frantom

Staff Sgt. Christopher Ogle and Liaka, a military working dog, prepare for the day's mission, a joint search and patrol conducted by U.S. Soldiers and the Iraqi National Police in the Hadar community of Baghdad, Iraq, Nov. 29.



Staff Sgt. Tyrone C. Marshall Jr.

Spc. Luciana Henry, 209th Aviation Support Battalion, provides some colorful commentary as she reads a Christmas book to students at Kipapa Elementary School, in Mililani, Hawaii, Dec. 4. The 209th ASB has a partnership with Kipapa Elementary School to help maintain strong ties between the military and local communities.

(Right) Soldiers complete a 121/2-mile ruck march as the final phase of the 8th Squadron, 1st Cavalry Regiment Spur Ride, Nov. 24.



Phil Sussman

COVENANT

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life without the help of the SFAC human resources specialist and the educational guidance counselor and that they always liked coming to the SFAC because they knew they could get the help they needed.

As a result of the Army Family Covenant, the Army Family Team Building program has provided training to 232 Army Family members in Level I, II, and III training. As a result of the covenant, resources are available to provide this training both onsite and online.

Because of this training, Army families in the Heidelberg community have become more self-reliant and better equipped to handle daily challenges as well as situations and crisis they may encounter during their Soldier's deployment.

The AFTB program has also trained five new instructors to support the

training of Army families.

The Respite Care program is designed to provide temporary relief for family members responsible for the regular care of persons with special needs. Once the program was established in 2007 and families began to take advantage of it, the demand increased rapidly. In the fiscal year just ended, Heidelberg has used \$81,170 and families have received 3,632 hours of care.

Respite care is not just for families with children. Adults who are enrolled in the EFMP program may be eligible as well.

In Heidelberg, the EFMP program has been able to offer respite to several families whose primary caregiver is EFMP and unable to care for their children due to treatment or some other medical emergency.

Last summer, the EFMP program in Heidelberg used respite funding to organize the first summer camp

program for EFMP families. Twelve children participated in the one-week camp with a range of activities such as therapeutic riding, pottery class, therapeutic music sessions and dance and movement classes.

Family Morale, Welfare and Recre-

ation was also able to support recreation needs with discounts of \$1 off a game at the Heidelberg Bowling Center and \$10 off golf lesson and/or green fees at the Heidelberg Golf Course. A total of \$217,800 was spent in CYSS enhancing a number of programs.

Covenant enhanced CYSS programs

- ◆ Two parents nights or days out each month
- ◆ A playgroup for parents and children which includes local field trips
- ◆ Free child care for monthly family readiness group meetings
- ◆ Special openings for unit functions
- ◆ Sixteen free hourly care hours
- ◆ A 20 percent fee reduction for deployed families
- ◆ Free sports classes for deployed families
- ◆ Eight free SKIES classes for deployed families
- ◆ Newly renovated spaces in the Central Registration Office to provide privacy for customer
- ◆ Onsite child care in facilities with parents
- ◆ Mobile child care to support off-site unit activities
- ◆ Appointments for family registrations outside duty hours when duty cannot accommodate parent's hours
- ◆ Extended child care in Family Child Care homes

STRONG BONDS

continued from page 1

divorce rate in both fiscal 2007 and 2008, but the actual number of divorces dropped by 618 – to 7,032.

Comparing these statistics to civilian divorce rates is difficult, officials said, but most sources agree that about 50 percent of first marriages end in divorce in the United States. The highest incidence of civilian divorces is within the 20- to 29-year-old population, the largest age group in the military.

Recognizing the hardships military life often imposes – and the challenges it can place on family relationships – the military services are working to buck societal trends through a full range of outreach programs. The programs are offered through the services' family support, chaplain and mental health counseling networks and range from support groups for spouses of deployed troops to weekend retreats for military couples.

The Army program, the largest, aims to build resiliency in Soldiers – 58 percent of them married – and the families who stand by them, said Lt. Col. George Wright, an Army spokesman.

The programs focus on communication, intimacy and conflict management, which research shows increases marriage satisfaction and reduces marital challenges.

"Military families have to adjust to more transitions than the typical family," said Chaplain (Lt. Col.) Carleton Birch, from the Army's Chief of Chaplains Office. "These programs strengthen the bonds that build resiliency in Army families."

The centerpiece of the Army program is "Strong Bonds," a program initiated by commanders and led by chaplains that helps Soldiers and their families build strong relationships. Strong Bonds has four parts: a general couples program, programs tailored for couples dealing with deployments, and programs for families and single Soldiers.

Much of the training is provided in a retreat-style format so Soldiers and their families can get away from their daily routines "to focus on their important relationships," Wright said.

Participation in the program has doubled every year since the program started five years ago, Birch reported. So far, more than 60,000 couples have participated in the training.

Chaplain (Maj.) Jimmy Nichols, family life coordi-

"Even without long deployments, relationships can grow stale and will lose the spark when not maintained properly. Taking advantage of programs such as Strong Bonds can be the difference between a relationship that is on the decline because of neglect and one that is happy and fulfilling."

—Chaplain (Maj.) Jimmy Nichols, USAG Baden-Württemberg Family Life Coordinator

nator for U.S. Army Garrison Baden-Württemberg, said the Strong Bonds program here is beneficial and should be taken advantage of.

"The stress and strain of deployments both for Soldiers and spouses can have a cumulative negative impact on relationships when not handled with care or fortified by conscious efforts at strengthening the marital union," he said. "Even without long deployments, relationships can grow stale and will lose the spark when not maintained properly."

"Taking advantage of programs such as Strong Bonds can be the difference between a relationship that is on the decline because of neglect and one that is happy and fulfilling," Nichols said. "For example, imagine how difficult it would be to maintain a snowman without the right conditions, i.e. protection from heat, the wind, or the neighborhood kids who'd enjoy knocking it down. Similarly, a happy marriage requires constant care and protection as well for it to be maintained."

According to Nichols, the Strong Bonds program is one-of-a-kind for families here in Germany. It is free, supported by the command and offered at least annually by each unit or chapel.

The National Institutes of Health, which recently completed the first year of a five-year study evaluating the program's effectiveness found "encouraging early results," Birch said.

Meanwhile, an attendee gave a full-fledged endorsement of the program's value after attending a Strong Bonds session at Fort Sam Houston, Texas.

"This is the first time since getting back from Iraq in April where I have felt that I am capable as well as confident enough to lead my family in a loving and caring environment," he said. "The tools that I have learned will serve us a lifetime. This should be mandatory training for all married couples."

But, if you can't participate in Strong Bonds,

Nichols said there are other ways to ensure keeping a strong marriage.

"In addition to retreat programs, I also encourage couples to take advantage of biblio-therapy – reading," he said. "Whether reading a book, magazine article, or internet link, there are literally thousands of reading resources for marriage and family enrichment. Also, professional counseling with a chaplain, ACS counselor, or at the Family Life Center are all important resources that are available for marriage and family enrichment."

While praising the benefits these programs offer families, officials recognize that strong marital and family relationships make better Soldiers.

It also has an important impact on a Soldier's decision to re-enlist, Birch said. Quoting other Army leaders, he said, "The Army recruits soldiers, but it retains families."

"My wife and I have been married for 21 years and have a strong marriage today not because we married our 'soul mate' or because we are exceptionally lucky people, but because of hard work to consciously take time to care for each other and the relationship, and to make amends when we hurt each other, as inevitably all marriage partners will," Nichols said. "The success of our marriage is not due to some 'magic' that we're lucky to possess, but by effort such as taking advantage of marriage enrichment workshops and seeking professional counseling. The Strong Bonds marriage retreat program does a good job of doing just that – strengthening marriages by providing the tools, the time, and the know-how to maintain and strengthen marital relationships."

For more information, talk to your unit chaplain or visit www.strongbonds.org to find an upcoming retreat.

(Editor's note: Kristen Marquez, Herald Post staff member, contributed to this article.)

Trier:

Walk in Roman footsteps in historic German town

By Dennis Johnson
USAG HESSEN PUBLIC AFFAIRS

You don't have to fly to Rome to walk among Roman ruins, to stand in a coliseum where gladiators once fought or to visit a Roman emperor's palace.

The German city of Trier has the distinction of being one the oldest settlements in Germany, its history stretches back to when Germany was at the frontier of the Roman Empire. Trier has more Roman ruins than any city north of the Alps and was designated a United Nations World Heritage site in 1986.

Founded by the Romans in 16 B.C. as Augusta Treverorum (City of Augustus in the land of the Treveri), Trier became the capital of the Western Roman Empire in the 3rd century, and from 293-395 was one of the residences of the emperor. Under the rule of Constantine the Great, 306-337, the city was rebuilt, and buildings such as the Palastaula and the Imperial Baths were constructed.

In 326 sections of the imperial family's residential palaces were extended and converted into a large basilica, the remains of which are still partly recognizable around the cathedral.

Emperor Constantius II resided in Trier from 328 to 340 and from 367, under Valentinian I, Trier became again an imperial residence until the death of Theodosius I in 395. At the time Trier was the largest city north of the Alps.

When the Roman army withdrew along the Rhein River at the beginning of the 5th century Trier was repeatedly sacked by the Franks as well as by troops of Attila the Hun in 451.

The city thrived again in the 14th

century when it became home to the prince-electors, those princes who voted for the Holy Roman Emperor. The town was briefly held by France in the early 19th century and then by Prussia in 1815. Karl Marx, the father of communism, was born in the town in 1818.

Today, Trier is a city of about 100,000 people, home to a university and a popular stop for tourists. The town is situated on the Mosel River and surrounded by the Eifel and Hunsrück Mountains. It lies only six miles from the Luxembourg border and makes a good base for exploring the Mosel vineyards, Luxembourg and the nearby mountains.

Things to see

Start at the tourist information office located next to the Porta Nigra to pick up a map of the town and to buy admission tickets. The Trier Card gives free or reduced admission to the main attractions and museums. Most sites can be reached easily by walking. For information visit the city Web site at www.trier.de.

Roman ruins

The Porta Nigra (Black Gate) is an imposing 2nd century city gate once part of the 6.4-kilometer city walls. Constructed of red sandstone, it's called the Black Gate due to its dingy appearance after years of accumulated soot and dirt.

The fortified gate has two towers and a courtyard. In the 11th century it was built into a church, St. Simeon, and parts of the church decoration can still be seen inside.

The city historical museum located next to the Porta Nigra focuses on regional history with emphasis on art and artifacts from the Middle Ages onward.

The Römische Palastaula is a vast, 220-foot-long, 90-foot-wide and 118-foot-high, 4th century basilica that was once the throne room of the Roman emperor Constantine. It is the largest surviving single-room Roman building. In medieval times it was part of the prince-electors' residence. Since the 19th century it has been used as a Protestant church.

The remains of the 4th century Kaiserthermen (Emperor's baths) shows the vast system of baths and saunas employed by the Romans. You can walk through underground tunnels that were part of the heating system.

The 2nd century Roman amphitheater in Trier could hold 20,000 spectators who were treated to entertainment such as gladiator battles and animal fights. Today, it is the site of an annual festival of ancient plays and open-air concerts. Below the arena visitors can walk through underground areas where animals, gladiators and prisoners waited to perform their gruesome spectacles.

Uncovered in the 1980s, the Thermenam Viehmarkt are the ruins of another Roman bath, one of three in Trier. Covered by a large glass cube the ruins show the outline of the walls and foundations of the bath complex.

There are numerous other Roman sites in Trier including a Roman bridge built from 144-152 over the Mosel – the oldest bridge in Germany – and the 2nd century Barbaratherman, another Roman bath.

Other sites to see

The Dom, the city's Catholic cathedral stands on the site of a former emperor's palace. After Constantine's last visit to Trier in 328-329, the palace was destroyed and replaced by a vast church about four times as big as the

present-day cathedral.

After the Roman era much of the church was destroyed and the present cathedral is a medieval construction. The cathedral claims to hold Christ's robe. It is rarely on display, but a reliquary holding the robe can be seen in the Holy Robe Chapel.

Next to the Dom is the Liebfrauenkirche, one of Germany's oldest Gothic churches.

Next to the Palastaula is the Prince-Elector's Residence, a rococo style palace with a restful garden.

The church of St. Gangolf, just off the Hauptmarkt, was the Protestant opposition to the Catholic Cathedral. It is entered through a small but flowery gate on the south side of the square. Notice the words near the top of the tower which read, "Stay awake and pray ..."

Trier's bishop countered by raising one of the cathedral towers higher (he could only afford to raise one) and he had written on his tower the rest of that Bible passage, "for you know not the hour when the Lord will come."

The birthplace of Karl Marx is now a museum dedicated to the founder of communism. Marx lived there only for the first year of his life before his family moved to a house near the Porta Nigra. Look for a plaque on the house there where Marx lived until he went away to university.

The city Hauptmarkt is a great place to sit with a drink or ice cream and gaze at the medieval and renaissance buildings, the fountain that features women and monkeys, and the market cross. (It's a replica – the 9th century original is in the city museum.) You'll need the time to read your guide book to learn about all that the Roman/German city of Trier has to offer.

GERMAN COOKING

Vanilla Crescents (Vanillekipferl)

Ingredients:

1/2 cup unsalted butter (at room temperature)
1 scant cup flour
2 scant tablespoons fine corn meal
1/3 scant cup ground almonds
1/4 cup confectioner's sugar
1 medium egg yolk
Seeds of 1 vanilla bean
1/2 cup superfine sugar

Directions:

Preheat the oven to 400°F.
Combine the butter, flour and corn meal until it resembles bread crumbs. Add the almonds, confectioner's sugar and egg yolk and mix until it forms a dough. Shape into a log, then wrap in plastic wrap and place in the fridge for an hour. Meanwhile, split the vanilla pod in half lengthwise. Scrape the black seeds out and mix them well with the superfine sugar. Remove the plastic wrap from the dough and cut the log into 25 even-sized pieces. Roll each piece into a log shape, then pinch each end and bend into a crescent shape. Place the biscuits on a baking sheet lined with baking paper.
Bake for 10-15 minutes or until golden brown.
Dust the warm cookies liberally with the vanilla sugar, serve and enjoy.

Lemon Almond Hearts

Ingredients:

3 egg yolks
2/3 cup superfine sugar
2 cups ground almonds
Finely grated zest of 1 organic unwaxed lemon
Confectioner's sugar
Egg, beaten, for the glaze

For decoration:

3/4 cup confectioner's sugar
Water or lemon juice to mix
Colorful chocolate candy

Directions:

Preheat the oven to 350°F.
In a bowl combine egg yolks and sugar with an electric whisk for one minute until the mixture is light and fluffy. Stir in the ground almonds and lemon zest to make a firm dough. Generously sprinkle a sheet of non-stick baking parchment with confectioner's sugar and roll out the dough. Using a heart-shaped pastry cutter, stamp out as many shapes as you can (re-rolling the trimmings to make more cookies) and place on a baking tray lined with non-stick baking parchment.
Mark the outside edge of each heart with the prongs of a fork and brush with egg wash. Bake for 8-10 minutes until golden-brown. Cool on a wire rack.
Mix the confectioner's sugar with enough water or lemon juice to create a thick icing. Ice the center of each heart and decorate with colorful chocolate candies and leave to set.
SOURCE: www.germanfoods.org

Learn to Shop for German Food

Are you curious about local products and food items available on the economy? Visit an organic food store or a typical grocery store accompanied by a registered dietician who is fluent in the German language. Call the Nutrition Care Division at the Heidelberg Health Center to book your free tour, DSN 371-2747, civ. 06221-17-2747.



DEAR MS.
Vicki

Vicki Johnson is military spouse and a clinical social worker with more than 12 years experience working with families in crisis. To contact Ms. Vicki, e-mail her at dearmsvicki@yahoo.com.

Dear Ms. Vicki,

My in-laws have totally turned against me. I married my husband when I was only 20 years old. I have to admit now that I am older that I did not know what I was doing when I married him. I did not know what life was all about and had never been away from home.

My husband and I were high school sweethearts and always the most popular couple in school. He played football and yes, I was a cheerleader.

We are from a small town in Tennessee. Of course our families know each other very well. I come from a family of factory workers and all of the men in his family are in some branch of the military.

My husband decided to join the Army, he has a brother who is in the Navy, and a brother in the Air Force. My father-in-law is a Marine.

I did not like the travel in the Army with my husband, mainly because I did not want to be away from home or my family. My husband loves the Army. We have two children together.

Well, Army life became too much for me and I moved back home from Germany. Germany was a hard shell for me to crack. I did not like dealing with the different language, or the culture.

So my husband got tired of me

complaining and did an ERD (Early Return of Dependents) for me and my children. I was so happy when I arrived back home with my family.

It was very quick when things returned back to normal. I am now working for a good company and going to school and I will have my degree in physical therapy and my parents are helping me take care of my children. I am getting a chance to hang out with my friends and having fun. Life is great!

Now I know that I want a divorce too. It's time for me to move on with my life. I believe I gave my marriage a genuine effort of five years.

I'm now 26 years old and believe life is too short to be unhappy. Besides I am never going back to Germany or anywhere near Army life again.

Which brings me to my next dilemma; I'm already in love again and with a member of my husband's family. My in-laws are livid and think I'm doing their son very wrong because he is serving his country in Germany.

Ms. Vicki it's not my fault he is in Germany. He is the one who wanted to be in the Army, I did not tell him to join. He joined on his own.

So what's the problem with me moving on, I'm divorcing him anyway? Is there a good way to tell my in-laws to mind their own business? Besides, when I divorce their son and marry someone else in their family at least they know me and they don't have to get to know another person.

What's wrong with love?

From: 26

Dear 26,

Oh my goodness. I think you should slow your roll.

OK, you want a divorce and you have moved on, I get it. However, I detect that you have this self-entitled attitude that says "I get what I want" and "I do what I want to do" not caring about who is affected by my decisions.

I'm trying to read between the lines here; please don't tell me you are involved with your brother-in-law! If so, I can understand why

your in-laws may be miffed. You are not even divorced from your husband yet and you've already hooked up with another guy, your husband's relative.

I'm sorry, I just don't think this is cool. Is your husband's family the only one in your town who has available sons? There is nothing wrong with love, but I think you are moving too fast and I also think what you are doing is inappropriate.

Are you really going to put another man over your children so soon? You should really think about this.

I would like to recommend that you speak to a professional before you make any decisions. Please contact Military OneSource at 800-342-9647. They will connect you with a counselor or therapist in your local area.

You don't want to be married, you didn't like Army life, you didn't like Germany or other places you traveled so think about this; why does the grass look greener on the other side to you?

Dear Ms. Vicki,

I think you really miss the mark on most of your answers and advice. When you should be tough and hard on someone, it appears that you back off. On the other hand when you should show a little compassion and leniency then you really come down like a hammer. I enjoy reading your column but I think you should be more consistent and have better balance. Wishing you happy holidays.

Dear Ms. Vicki,

I hope most of your letters you receive from those serving our country and their families are a joke. It's quite scary to think these are the people who are serving our country. It's no wonder our military is in such bad shape. The officers and their families are crazy and so are the NCOs and their families. Where's our leadership? I guess they've all gone to hell in a hand basket.

Be wary of body piercing dangers

Marcie Birk
USACHPPM

Israeli media reported that a tongue piercing caused the September death of a young Israeli soldier who developed a brain infection and then liver failure.

While death is rare, piercing body parts can lead to allergic reactions, disfiguring scars and infections.

In the past 25 years, body piercing's popularity has increased dramatically as a fashion statement or a form a self-expression.

On Army installations or other places under Army control, U.S. Soldiers are subject to specific regulations regarding body piercing both on and off duty.

Female Soldiers may wear prescribed earrings while in uniform, but even ear piercing poses risks.

Infections are a common risk of body piercing. Other risks of body piercing include blood-borne diseases like hepatitis B, tetanus, or human immunodeficiency virus (HIV).

Piercings to the oral-facial region can carry risks and lead to complications, according to Col. Tim Mitchener, an Army public health dentist at the Army Center for Health Promotion and Preventive Medicine.

Risks of body piercing can be decreased but not eliminated. A piercing may only take a minute to get, but could cause a lifetime of regret.

Michael Peterson to bring show to troops

By Lira Frye

USAG BADEN-WÜRTTEMBERG PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Singer and songwriter Michael Peterson will perform a free concert at the Village Pavilion located on Patrick Henry Village, Saturday beginning at 7 p.m.

Peterson, whose hit single "Drink, Swear, Steal & Lie" and his follow up release, "From Here To Eternity," brought him national recognition as a country artist in 1997, has performed on military installations and for deployed troops in the middle east and Korea.

Ralph Santaliz, USAG Baden-Württemberg Family, Morale, Welfare and Recreation director, met Peterson during the singer's visit to Fort Wainwright, Alaska.

"FMWR command and the Installation Management Command brought Michael up to perform for the 172nd Infantry Brigade Soldiers who had just got back from their



first 15-month tour in Iraq," Santaliz said. "The Soldiers loved him. He's a great American who enjoys playing for Soldiers and their families."

According to Santaliz, this is the second time Peterson has given up his holiday time

to come and entertain Soldiers. In January, he plans to return to Iraq and Afghanistan.

"Michael puts on a great concert. We need to show our appreciation for his efforts by filling up the Village Pavilion Community Activities Center."

Peterson will perform in Kaiserslautern's Kazabra Club located on Vogelweh, Sunday at 9 p.m., and in Baumholder's Wagon Wheel Theater on Smith Barracks, Monday beginning at 7 p.m.

For more information on the artist, visit www.michaelpetersonmusic.com.

GET OUT! area events

December 19

Comedy After Dark — Get your laugh and groove on at Mannheim's Top Hat Club starting at 9 p.m. A professional stateside comedian and R&B band will entertain you! Patrons must be at least 18. Tickets are \$15 in advance and \$18 at the door. Benjamin Franklin Village, Bldg. 738. DSN 380-9370, civ. 0621-730-9370.

After-Work Christmas Market, Heidelberg — Kaiserslautern Army Outdoor Recreation. DSN 493-4117, civ. 0631-3406-4117.

December 20

Michael Peterson Concert — Don't miss your chance to see a free, live performance by hit songwriter and recording artist Michael Peterson at the Heidelberg Village Pavilion, 7 p.m. www.michaelpetersonmusic.com.

Paris Express, France; Alpine Ski Express; Valkenburg Caves; Netherlands and Aachen Christmas Markets — Kaiserslautern Army Outdoor Recreation. DSN 493-4117, Civ. 0631-3406-4117.

Engelberg, Switzerland — A one-day ski trip with Mannheim Outdoor Recreation, DSN 381-7215, civ. 0621-739-251.

December 21

Michael Peterson Concert — Don't miss your chance to see a free, live performance by hit songwriter and recording artist Michael Peterson at the Kaiserslautern Kazabra Club, 9 p.m. www.michaelpetersonmusic.com.

December 23

Heidelberg Weihnachtskreis — For

Upcoming concerts and events

Let the USO do the leg work for you. Order your tickets from the USO center and they'll call you when they come in.

SAP Arena:

- ◆ Afrika! Afrika! — From Feb. 10
- ◆ Tina Turner — Feb. 20 (added show, tickets moving fast)
- ◆ Die Adler (home games)

the ninth year, and through Jan. 6, the Heidelberg Christmas Circus will be held at Messplatz on Kirchheimer Weg. Tickets are €15-25 for children and €20-30 for adults. U.S. armed forces ID card holders receive a €3 reduction. Tickets can be purchased online, www.ticketonline.com, or at the circus cashier's window.

December 27

Engelberg, Switzerland — A one-day ski trip with Mannheim Outdoor Recreation, DSN 381-7215, civ. 0621-739-251.

January 3

Feldberg Ski Trip — A one-day ski & snowboard trip with Mannheim Outdoor Recreation, DSN 381-7215, civ. 0621-739-251.

January 13

Singing Auditions — Mannheim Family and Morale, Welfare & Recreation invites vocal artists who enjoy performing for a live audience, to audition for our first ever "Old School Valentine Dinner Show" 5-7 p.m. Jan. 12, and 6-8 p.m. Jan. 13, at the Top Hat Club. DSN 385-2342, civ. 0621-730-2342.

January 15

DoDDS-E Jazz Concert Series — The DoDDS-Europe Jazz Seminar 2009 concludes with three concerts. Students from around Europe will perform at the Heidelberg High School Theater, 2:30 p.m. Jan. 15; the Portland-Forum in Leimen, 7 p.m. Jan. 15; and at the Mannheim High School, 10:30 a.m. Jan. 16.

Ongoing

Ice Skating — Head to Schwetzingen's Schlossplatz through Jan. 25, 10 a.m.-11 p.m., for a fun-filled day of ice-skating. Adults: €3.30, Children: €2.50 for two hours. Civ. 06202-93270, www.schwetzingen-eiszauber.de.

Pirates: Masters of the Seven Seas — See this children's exhibition at the Württemberg State Museum in Stuttgart through April 13. www.landesmuseum-stuttgart.de.

The Age of Heroes - The Dark Centuries of Greece 1200-800 B.C. — The exhibition transports visitors into the exciting times of these heroes. An Archaeological exhibition at the Baden State Museum in Karlsruhe through Feb. 15. www.landesmuseum.de.

The Vikings: An Exhibition Project — Head to Speyer through July 15 for this exhibition, mounted by the Historical Museum of the Palatinate, which showcases the culture and society of Scandinavia in the period from 800 to 1200 AD. The exhibit includes rune stones, weapons, jewelry, precious silverware, coins and parts of ships from museums, collections and institutions in the Scandinavian countries, and the areas where they had an influence. The exhibition is also integrated into the "Museum for Young People." <http://museum.speyer.de/de/histmus>.

coming to THEATERS



NOTHING LIKE THE HOLIDAYS

It's Christmas time and the far-flung members of the Rodriguez family are converging at their parents' home in Chicago to celebrate the season and rejoice in their youngest brother's safe return from combat overseas. For Jesse, coming home has rekindled feelings for an old flame. His older sister Roxanna, a struggling actress, has been chasing her Hollywood dreams for years with little to show for it. And much to the dismay of their mother Anna, eldest brother Mauricio brings home an executive wife who would rather

raise capital than a child. In the course of one eventful week, traditions will be celebrated, secrets revealed and major life decisions made. When the Rodriguezes learn that one of their own is facing a true crisis, they pull together: Old resentments are forgotten, familial bonds are re-affirmed and the healing power of laughter works its magic as the family discovers they are much stronger than they ever realized. Rated PG-13 (sexual dialogue, brief drug references) 99 minutes.

PLAYING THIS WEEK

Heidelberg, Patrick Henry Village

Dec. 19 - NOTHING LIKE THE HOLIDAYS (PG-13) 6:30 p.m.; THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL (PG-13) 9:30

Dec. 20 - NOTHING LIKE THE HOLIDAYS (PG-13) 2 p.m.; THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL (PG-13) 5 p.m.; LAKEVIEW TERRACE (PG-13) 9:30 p.m.

Dec. 21 - NOTHING LIKE THE HOLIDAYS (PG-13) 2 p.m.; THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL (PG-13) 5 p.m.

Dec. 22 - BODY OF LIES (R) 7 p.m.

Dec. 23 - QUARANTINE (R) 7 p.m.

Dec. 24 - NOTHING LIKE THE HOLIDAYS (PG-13) 3 p.m.

Mannheim, Schuh

Dec. 19 - FOUR CHRISTMASSES (PG-13) 7 p.m.

Dec. 20 - FOUR CHRISTMASSES (PG-13) 2 p.m.; BODY OF LIES (R) 5 p.m.

Dec. 21 - FOUR CHRISTMASSES (PG-13) 2 p.m.; QUARANTINE (R) 5 p.m.

Dec. 22 - LAKEVIEW TERRACE (PG-13) 7 p.m.

Dec. 23 - BODY OF LIES (R) 7 p.m.

Dec. 24 - NOTHING LIKE THE HOLIDAYS (PG-13) 7 p.m.

Vogelweh, Galaxy

Dec. 19 - THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL (PG-13) 3:30 p.m.; NOTHING LIKE THE HOLIDAYS (PG-13) 7 p.m.; THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL (PG-13) 10:30 p.m.

Dec. 20 - NOTHING LIKE THE HOLIDAYS (PG-13) 11 a.m.; 3 p.m.; THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL (PG-13) 7 p.m., 10:30 p.m.

Dec. 21 - NOTHING LIKE THE HOLIDAYS (PG-13) 11 a.m.; 3 p.m.; THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL (PG-13) 7 p.m.

Dec. 22 - QUARANTINE (R) 7 p.m.

Dec. 23 - BODY OF LIES (R) 7 p.m.

Dec. 24 - LAKEVIEW TERRACE (PG-13) 7 p.m.

Dec. 25 - THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL (PG-13) 7 p.m.

Ramstein, Hercules

Dec. 19 - QUARANTINE (R) 7 p.m.

Dec. 20 - LAKEVIEW TERRACE (PG-13) 7 p.m.

Dec. 21 - BODY OF LIES (R) 7 p.m.

Dec. 25 - FOUR CHRISTMASSES (PG-13) 7 p.m.

Ramstein, Nightingale

Dec. 19 - BEVERLY HILLS CHIHUAHUA (PG) 3:30 p.m.; FOUR CHRISTMASSES (PG-13) 7 p.m.; BODY OF LIES (R) 10:30 p.m.

Dec. 20 - BEVERLY HILLS CHIHUAHUA (PG) 11 a.m.; FOUR CHRISTMASSES (PG-13) 3 p.m.; 7 p.m.; QUARANTINE (R) 10:30 p.m.

Dec. 21 - BEVERLY HILLS CHIHUAHUA (PG) 3 p.m.; FOUR CHRISTMASSES (PG-13) 7 p.m.

Dec. 22 - LAKEVIEW TERRACE (PG-13) 7 p.m.

Dec. 23 - QUARANTINE (R) 7 p.m.

Dec. 24 - BODY OF LIES (R) 7 p.m.

Dec. 25 - NOTHING LIKE THE HOLIDAYS (PG-13) 7 p.m.

THEATER INFORMATION

Patrick Henry Village, Heidelberg, 06221-27-238

Schuh Theater, Mannheim, 0621-730-1790

Galaxy Theater, Vogelweh, 0631-50017

Hercules, Ramstein, 06371-47-5550

Nightingale, Ramstein, 06371-47-6147

Visit www.aafes.com for updated listings and more movie descriptions

community HIGHLIGHTS

Estate Claims

Anyone having any claims on or obligations to the estate of Michael Macari, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 5th Signal Command, should contact the summary court officer, Capt. Crystan Allan at DSN 380-5901, civ. 0621-730-5901.

\$100k Reward for Information

Special Agents from the U.S. Army Criminal Investigation Command (CID) are offering a \$100,000 reward to anyone with information leading to the apprehension and conviction of the person(s) responsible for the 2001 death of Pfc. Amanda Gonzales in Hanau. E-mail CID at crimetips@conus.army.mil.

Holiday Mail Dates

To ensure arrival of holiday cards and packages mailed from here to the continental U.S., community members are reminded of the recommended mail date: Express Mail, Dec. 20.

Rental Car Fuel Cards

The Heidelberg and Mannheim Customs Field offices will now issue fuel cards for rental vehicles during normal business hours. Local military police stations will issue the form after normal business hours.

local EMPLOYMENT

Program Assistant

Child, Youth and School Services is hiring program assistants looking for a flexible work schedule, regular full-time or regular part-time employment starting at \$9.84 per hour. Health and life insurance as well as retirement benefits are available for some positions. Receive a 50 percent employee discount for your own child care needs. Free training is provided and scholarships are available. DSN 493-4370, civ. 0631-3406-4370.

Bookkeeper

The Mannheim Thrift Shop is currently accepting applications for bookkeeper. The position is 20 hours per week. Stop by the Mannheim Thrift Store, Bldg. 235, Sullivan Barracks, to pick up an application.

Chapel Watch Care Coordinator

USAG Kaiserslautern is seeking a chapel watch care coordinator for fiscal year 2009. Watch care coordinators conduct activities for, and ensure the safety of, children in their care. DSN 493-4098, civ. 0631-3406-4098.

Ski and Snowboard Instructors

Mannheim Outdoor Recreation is looking for ski and snowboard instructors to conduct beginner courses. DSN 381-7215, civ. 0621-739-251.

Mail Room Volunteers

U.S. Army Garrison Baden-Württemberg is recruiting full-time volunteers to work in the consolidated mail rooms Monday-Friday through Feb. 15. DSN 370-7144, jennifer.m.coleman@eur.army.mil.

Respite Care Providers

Kaiserslautern Army Community Service needs respite care providers for short-term care for children with special needs. Applicants must be at least 18 years old, and may make up to \$35/hour. DSN 493-4110, civ. 0631-3406-4110.

KAISERSLAUTERN Education

♦ **ACS Classes and Events** – Reservations are required for most classes. DSN 493-4203, civ. 0631-3406-4203, www.mwrgermany.com/kl/acs.

♦ **New Parenting Skills Group** – Army Community Service and Vogelweh Elementary School are hosting a new Parenting Skills Group that will meet on the first Wednesday of each month, beginning Jan. 7. Participants will make new friends, engage in great conversation, and learn helpful parenting skills from child development professionals. Child care is provided, and there is no fee to attend. For more information, e-mail Pam Ash, Pamela.Ash@eu.dodea.edu.

Community

♦ **LPMC Sick Call** – Sick call at the Family Medicine Clinic at Landstuhl Regional Medical Center will change to 7 a.m. beginning Jan. 1. For more information, DSN 486-7796, civ. 06371-86-7796.

♦ **Kleber Clinic relocates** – The U.S. Army Health Clinic, Bldg. 3287 on Kleber Kaserne, has relocated to a modular and temporary facility, 100 meters in front of its normal location. During the renovation, phone numbers and hours will remain the same. For more information, call the clinic's commander, Maj. Chuck Unruh, DSN 483-6256, civ. 0631-411-6265.

♦ **Influenza Vaccinations** – Flu vaccinations are available at the Kleber Health Clinic 8-11 a.m. and 1-3:30 p.m. Monday-Friday, with the exception of Thursday mornings, and at the LPMC Immunization Clinic 7:30-11:30 a.m. and 1-4 p.m. Monday-Friday.

♦ **VAT Form Sales at USAMMCE (Pirmasens)** – A new pilot program is now in place at USAMMCE for Value-Added Tax Relief. This program allows authorized uses to order VAT forms (for purchases under €2,500) electronically and receive them at their APO address. DSN 483-1780, civ. 0631-411-1780.

♦ **Holiday Bingo** – Play to win big at Kazabra Club Holiday Bingo 3-9 p.m. Dec. 21. Four guaranteed \$1,000 games will be played. For more information go to www.mwrg-ermany.com, or call DSN 489-7261, civ. 0631-536-7261.

♦ **American Legion** – Post GR01 will hold post meetings at 6:30 p.m. Jan. 6 at Bldg. 368 on Rhine Ordnance Barracks. For more information, call Stephen Ward at 486-7516 or wardtrans@yahoo.com. Visit the Post GR01 Web site at www.ktownamericanlegion.org.

♦ **Pulaski Thrift Store** – The Kaiserslautern-Landstuhl Spouses' Association thrift store on Pulaski Barracks has weekly and monthly sales on thrift store property items.

"Anything You Can Wear" TSP items are 50 percent off every Friday. This is clothing, purses, belts, hats and shoes. The first Saturday of each month is the TSP Storewide Sale, where all TSP items are 50 percent off. For more information about KLSA, visit www.KLSAGrapevine.org.

♦ **Warrior Resiliency Group** – For service members who have deployed and wish to become mentally stronger; learn more about what to expect; address difficulties with sleep, anger, being 'keyed-up'; and relationships. Four weekly sessions 2:30 p.m.-4 p.m. every Thursday at Landstuhl Regional Medical Center-1 Delta. The first session is Jan. 8. Contact David Lawler, LCSW, or Korina Ortega, PhD, at Landstuhl Regional Medical Center, Social Work Services, 486-8366, civ. 06371-86-8366.

♦ Army Traffic Safety Program

– The 26-and-under Intermediate Driving classes are given 1 p.m. Thursdays at the U.S. Army Garrison Kaiserslautern's In-processing Training Center, Bldg. 3109 on Daenner Kaserne. Family members are welcome to attend. For more information, DSN 483-8805/6509.

♦ **Reporting Fuel, Oil Spills** – To report fuel and oil spills, contact the U.S. fire department at the emergency response number 117 for on-post Army in Germany, Belgium and Italy or dial 112 civilian off post in Germany, Belgium, Italy and The Netherlands and on-base Air Force and The Netherlands. For more information on spills, don't hesitate to call the U.S. Army Garrison Kaiserslautern's Environmental Management Division at 483-6059.

♦ **Breitenwald Range Closed** – The 7th U.S. Army Joint Multinational Training Command, Training Support Center-Kaiserslautern's Breitenwald 25-meter and 300-meter ranges are closed for construction until January. Units scheduled to use these ranges during this period need to call the Kaiserslautern Range Control at 486-8339. Units are encouraged to use Baumholder and Mannheim facilities during this time.

HEIDELBERG

Education

♦ **ACS Classes and Events** – Community Orientation Briefing, noon - 3:30 p.m. Dec. 22, 29; Re-integration, 9 a.m. Dec. 23, 30. English as a Second Language classes are offered at various times throughout the week. DSN 370-6883, civ. 06221-57-6883.

♦ German Language Classes

– German language daytime and evening classes are being offered at Patton Education Center starting Jan. 20. The cost is €80 for level 1 and €100 for levels 2, 3, and 4, for 38 hours over eight weeks. Registration is 5-7 p.m. Jan. 12, 13, in room 116,

Patton Education Center. Civ. 06221-16-8226 or 06221-17-6176.

Community

♦ **Health Center open for holidays** – The Heidelberg Health Center will remain open throughout the holiday season. Please call Central Appointments at 06221-17-2622 to schedule an appointment.

♦ **The Heidelberg Health Center's Wellness Center** – recently moved to building 3617 on Nachrichten Kaserne. The Wellness Center is open Monday through Friday from 7:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Current services include blood pressure screenings, weight checks, exercise testing and metabolic analysis. DSN 371-2706, civ. 06221-17-2706.

♦ **Satellite Pharmacy** – The Satellite Pharmacy at the Shopping Center will be closed Dec. 30 - Jan. 9. Patients may pick up prescription refills at the Heidelberg Health Center Pharmacy on Nachrichten Kaserne 7:30 a.m.-6 p.m. Monday-Friday.

♦ **Kontakt Club Events** – Deidesheim Christmas Market, 2 p.m. Dec. 20; Hiking or sledding in hills of Heidelberg, 1 p.m. Dec. 27. Dining out in Speyer, 6 p.m. Jan. 3. Civ. 06202-18071, Annemarie.Fritz@t-online.de.

♦ **Gift-Wrapping Services** – The Heidelberg Better Opportunities for Single Soldiers program will provide gift-wrapping services for donation 3-7 p.m. Dec. 20 at the shopping center food court.

♦ **Join Girl Scouts** – Girls, ages 5-17, are invited to become Girl Scouts. Contact our troop organizer: Jana Mayer at 06224-598-737 or trooporganizer2@gsusahd.org. www.gsusahd.org.

♦ **CPAC Closure** – The Heidelberg Civilian Personnel Advisory Center will be closed after noon Dec. 19. For emergencies, contact 0162-271-1649.

♦ **NAACP to honor King** – The Rhein Neckar branch of the NAACP is sponsoring its 23rd Annual International Commemoration program honoring Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., 5 p.m. Jan. 17 at the Providenzkirche, 90A Hauptstrasse in Heidelberg. Keynote speaker will be Dr. Hubert J. Locke. The theme for the event is "History and Hope." For more information, call Emily Gourdine DSN 370-8004, civ. 0162-296-0030 or e-mail emily.gourdine@eu.dodea.edu.

♦ **Heidelberg Lacrosse Club** – Men's and Women's Teams. We are looking for players of all ability levels and ages. Come out to play the game and meet other local German and American players. All are welcome. Enjoy the fun of playing lacrosse here in Heidelberg and throughout Europe. For more information and practice schedules, call Jim Moentmann, civ. 06221-

338-9168 (evenings or weekends), jimmoentmann@aol.com.

♦ **Construction Near MTV** – The Stadtwerke Heidelberg (city works) is installing a new district heating line at Kirschgartenstrasse next to Mark Twain Village between Rheinstrasse and Lenbachweg. The project began Nov. 17 and will take at least three months, depending on weather conditions. Construction will be done in phases of 50 meters each starting at the church area with access to individual parking spaces (three to four at a time) being blocked for a short period.

MANNHEIM

Education

♦ **ACS Classes** – Toddler Parenting Class, 9-10 a.m. Dec. 22; School Age Parenting, 9-10 a.m. Dec. 23; Mom and Me Play Group, 10 a.m.-noon Dec. 24; Hearts Apart Support Group Brownbag Workshop, 11:30 a.m.-1 p.m. Dec. 24; School Age Parenting, 9-10 a.m. Dec. 30; Mom and Me Play Group, 10 a.m.-noon Dec. 31. English as a Second Language is offered during the week. DSN 385-3101, civ. 0621-730-3101.

Community

♦ **CYSS Programs** – YAC (Youth Action Council), Dec. 19; Passport to Manhood, Dec. 22; Project Learn, Dec. 23; Ultimate Journey, Dec. 23; Club Tech Youth Sponsorship, Dec. 24, 26; Dragon Fly Quest, Dec. 30. Groups meet 4-5 p.m. in Bldg. 696, Sullivan Barracks. DSN 380-9997, civ. 0621-730-9997.

♦ **Sullivan Library** – Story Hour, 11 a.m.-noon Thursdays; Scrapbook Club, noon-3 p.m. Sundays. DSN 380-1740, civ. 0621-730-1740.

♦ **Housing's New Hours** – Housing offices on Sullivan Barracks have new operation hours: 8:30 a.m.-noon and 12:30-3 p.m. Monday-Thursday and 8:30 a.m.-noon and 12:30-2:50 p.m. Friday.

♦ **Veterans of Foreign Wars** – VFW Post 9534 is now located in Bldg. 678 Apt. 6A and B, Jefferson Street, Sullivan Barracks has a new Web site, www.mannheimvfw.com. Every Friday night at 6 p.m., there is a VFW social for members and guests. New members are welcome. A monthly membership meeting is held the first Monday of the month. The VFW can assist with answering questions and applying for VA benefits, by appointment. Civ. 0621-7249-1920 or 0152-0352-8834.

♦ **"Dancing With The Girls - Snowflake Ball"** – The Mannheim Girl Scouts are hosting an evening of fun for all school-aged girls. 6-8 p.m. Dec. 18 at the Mannheim Middle School Multi-purpose room. Contact mannheimings@yahoo.com or Sibyl Sheppard, civ. 0151-582-11319, or Tina Capito, civ. 0160-979-88776.

HOLIDAY HOURS

KAISERSLAUTERN

♦ **Army Education Centers** – Army Education Centers are closed Dec. 24-26 and 31, and Jan. 1-2. Emergency contact number for Dec. 24 and 31 is DSN 486-6822, civ. 06371-89-6822. The education centers will resume normal business 7:30 a.m. Jan. 5.

♦ **EEO** – The Equal Employment Opportunity Office is closed Dec. 30 to Jan. 2. Information on EEO can be found at www.kaiserslautern.army.mil/sites/installation/eoo.asp.

♦ **Holiday Hours at Army Post Offices** – The Army post offices on Landstuhl Regional Medical Center and Daenner Kaserne have holiday customer service hours, 9 a.m.-4 p.m., that will continue until Dec. 23. The Pulaski Barracks mail room is open noon-3 p.m. Saturday until Jan. 3. DSN 484-8120, civ. 0631-413-8120.

HEIDELBERG

♦ **PHV Refuse Collection Schedule** – All refuse containers will be emptied Dec. 27, Jan. 3, 9. Christmas trees are to be put next to the recycling islands and will be picked up with the biodegradable waste.

♦ **MTV Refuse Collection Sched-**

ule – All refuse containers will be emptied Dec. 24, Jan. 2, 10. Extra pick-ups: paper, Dec. 27; rubbish, Dec. 29; packaging, Dec. 30. Christmas trees are to be put next to the recycling islands and will be picked up with the biodegradable waste.

♦ **Recycling Center** – The Patrick Henry Village Recycling Center will close at noon Dec. 24, and will reopen Dec. 27. The center will close noon Dec. 31, and reopen Jan. 2. The reuse center closes 30 minutes before the recycling center. All other Heidelberg recycling center will be closed Dec. 24-26, and Dec. 31-Jan. 1. A container will be available at the recycling center to dispose of Christmas trees following the holiday.

♦ **Thrift Shop Closure** – The Heidelberg Thrift Shop will be closed Dec. 19-Jan. 5. All items expiring during the closure must be withdrawn prior to the closure.

♦ **Training Support Center** – All Heidelberg TSC offices – DA Photo Lab; Graphics Section; Training Resource Center, and the military weapons firing range – will be closed Dec. 26 and Jan. 2.

♦ **Europe Regional Library** – The Europe Regional Library and Sup-

port Centers will be open noon-6 p.m. Dec. 23; closed Dec. 24-27; open 10 a.m.-6 p.m. Dec. 28; noon-6 p.m. Dec. 29-31; and closed Jan. 1. The regular schedule will resume Jan. 2.

♦ **Patton Army Education Center** will be closed on Dec. 24-26 and Dec. 31-Jan. 2. Emergency contact numbers for Dec. 24, 26, 31 and Jan. 2. DSN 385-2053, civ. 0621-730-2053. The Education Center will resume normal business hours Jan. 5.

♦ **U.S. Forces Customs office** – will be closed Dec. 24-26, Jan. 1, 6. On Dec. 31 the office will be open from 7:30-10:30 a.m. The office will also be closed Jan. 19. DSN 370-8998/7142, civ. 06221-57-8898/7142.

MANNHEIM

♦ **Optometry services** – The Army Health Clinic's optometry services will be limited through Jan. 6. Active-duty service members should contact the Heidelberg Health Center, DSN 371-2622, civ. 06221-17-2622 to make an optometry appointment. Family Members should visit the Coleman Vision Clinic.

DINING FACILITIES

♦ **Landstuhl Regional Medical Center Dining Facility** – will have normal meal selection 11 a.m.-1:30 p.m. Dec. 25. DSN 486-6639, civ. 06371-86-6639.

♦ **Patriot Gardens** – Bldg. 163 on Rhine Ordnance Barracks will be open Dec. 25. DSN 493-2415, civ. 0631-340-6-2415.

♦ **Lindberg Hof Dining Facility** – Bldg. 2791 on Kapaun Air Station will be closed Dec. 25. DSN 489-6580, civ. 0631-536-6580.

♦ **Rheinland Dining Facility** – will host a holiday meal in Bldg. 2107, on Ramstein Air Base, 11 a.m.-2 p.m. Dec. 25. This dinner is open to all military enlisted ranks, retirees and their

families. Family members of E-4 and below will not have to pay the surcharge, 33 percent of the meal cost. Prices vary depending on customers' meal selections. DSN 480-3417, civ. 06371-47-3417.

♦ **212th Combat Support Hospital Dining Facility** – Bldg. 1206 on Miesau Army Depot will be open Dec. 25. DSN 481-3434/3609, civ. 06372-842-3434/3609.

♦ **Patton Dining Facility** – Bldg. 112 on Patton Barracks will be closed for dinner Dec. 22-24, and 29-31. The facility will be closed Dec. 25-28, and Jan. 1-4. DSN 373-5023, civ. 06221-17-5023.

Mannheim holiday celebrations

♦ **Holidays Around the World** – Child, Youth and School Services invites the community to the Holidays Around the World. Come and learn how other countries celebrate the holidays. There will be different stations dedicated to various countries. This event will be held at the following locations, dates, and times: Youth Services, 2-4 p.m. Dec. 20; Family Child Care, 1-3 p.m. Dec. 22; Child Development Center, 9:30-11:30 a.m. Dec. 23; School Age Services, 1-3 p.m. Dec. 24. DSN 380-4864, civ. 0621-730-9997.


♦ **Family New Year's Eve Party** – This night includes disco bowling, champagne toast, finger food, music and party favors at the Bowling Center 8 p.m.-2 a.m. Tickets are \$22 for adults and \$15 for kids (4-12). DSN 380-9528, civ. 0621-730-9528.

♦ **Variety Music New Year's Party** – Celebrate the evening with a variety of music, food, party favors, and complimentary champagne at the Cove 8 p.m.-5 a.m. Tickets are \$15 in advance and \$18 at the door. DSN 385-2884, civ. 0621-730-2884.

♦ **'70s & '80s R&B New Year's Eve Party** – Bring in the New Year with the hottest R&B tunes played by DJ Big Money, free breakfast, party favors, and complimentary champagne at the Top Hat Club 9 p.m.-4 a.m. Tickets are \$25 in advance and \$30 at the door. DSN 380-9370, civ. 0621-730-9370.

♦ **Youth Services New Year's Formal Dance** – 6-12 graders are invited to come dressed to impress 7 p.m.-midnight Jan. 3. There will be a DJ, food, and various fun activities. DSN 380-4864, civ. 0621-730-9997.

This list is incomplete, and only lists the holiday hours submitted to the Herald Post.



Where do you turn when Severe Weather hits?

USAREUR Road Conditions - Weather Conditions - School Closure Information

SEVERE WEATHER WARNING IN EFFECT 10/31/2008 10:35:00 AM

For road condition information call:

| | DSN | Civilian |
|----------------------|----------|----------------|
| USAG Heidelberg: | 388-2223 | 06221-678-2223 |
| USAG Kaiserslautern: | 480-2653 | 06371-47-2653 |
| USAG Mannheim: | 385-2589 | 0621-730-2589 |

Road, weather conditions, school closure information online:

<http://g3operations.hqusareur.army.mil/Divisions/OPS/ASGConditions/default.asp>

** A link can be found under the safety menu on the USAG Baden-Württemberg homepage: www.bw.eur.army.mil

Listen to AFN for updates:

| | FM | AM |
|-----------------|----------|---------|
| Heidelberg: | 104.6 FM | AM 1143 |
| Kaiserslautern: | 100.2 FM | AM 1107 |
| Mannheim: | 107.3 FM | AM 1143 |

Via AFN decoders: FM signal is Channel 152. The AM signal is Channel 153.

**** For duty schedule variations contact your chain of command**

| USAG | ROADS | WEATHER | SCHOOLS | AS OF DATE |
|----------------------------|-------|---------------------------|---------|------------------------|
| USAG HEIDELBERG (H 52) | GREEN | H 52; L 33; PARTLY CLOUDY | OPEN | 11/12/2008 10:01:00 AM |
| USAG KAISERSLAUTERN (H 48) | GREEN | H 48; L 39; PARTLY CLOUDY | OPEN | 11/12/2008 12:40:00 AM |
| USAG MANNHEIM (H 51) | GREEN | H 51; L 41; RAIN | OPEN | 11/12/2008 3:57:00 AM |
| USAG GRAFENWOHR (H 47) | GREEN | H 47; L 36; PARTLY CLOUDY | OPEN | 11/12/2008 9:11:00 AM |
| USAG HOHENHEIM (H 45) | GREEN | H 45; L 36; PARTLY CLOUDY | OPEN | 11/12/2008 9:08:00 AM |
| USAG GIESSEN (H 57) | GREEN | H 57; L 43; CLOUDY | OPEN | 11/12/2008 2:05:00 AM |
| USAG WIESBADEN (H 54) | GREEN | H 54; L 41; CLOUDY | OPEN | 11/12/2008 2:04:00 AM |
| USAG SCHWENNINGEN (H 50) | GREEN | H 50; L 46; CLOUDY | CLOSED | 11/12/2008 12:05:00 AM |
| USAG STUTTGART (H 41) | GREEN | H 41; L 37; PARTLY CLOUDY | OPEN | 11/12/2008 12:04:00 AM |